

**ABSTRACT**

A method of forming a self-aligned contact hole suitable for a semiconductor substrate having a pair of gate electrodes. First, a nitride etching stop layer is formed over the gate electrodes and the semiconductor substrate. Then, an oxide  
5 insulating layer is formed on the nitride etching stop layer, Next, the oxide insulating layer is plasma-etched by an etching gas containing  $C_5F_8$  and  $CHF_3$  or  $C_4F_6$  and  $CHF_3$  so as to form a self-aligned contact hole between the pair of gate electrode.